

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Claims 1-18 (Cancelled)

19. (Currently amended) A secure transaction system that utilizes a public network, the system comprising
a plurality of servers connected to the public network for providing a public web-based tax service that allows merchant subscribers to accumulate tax information, wherein different functions of the tax service are performed by different servers; and

means for providing security for information on the servers and information during transmission over the public network between the servers.

20. (Currently amended) The system of claim 19, wherein the web-based tax service ~~further~~ includes tax identification, tax computation, tax collection, tax remittance and tax reporting for audit servers.

21. (Previously presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the security means includes managed firewalls for preventing unwanted data from being entered into the system while data is being transmitted between subscribers and the servers.

22. (Previously presented) The system of claim 19, further comprising means for providing balancing and scalability of the servers.

23. (Previously presented) The system of claim 19 wherein the security means includes a tiered architecture, PKI 2-way authentication and authorization, HTTPS post, with XML document and SSH for remote administration.

24. (Previously presented) The system of claim 19, further comprising means for recording the disk usage, access logging and heart beat monitoring and sending alerts.

25. (Previously presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the security means also provides security for information transmitted between the servers and the merchant subscribers.